

Analytical study of social networking sites usage and social anxiety among physical education students

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ABSTRACT

Social networking sites usages (SNSu) are online platforms used for communication, sharing, and connecting with others. This paper aims to investigate the current status of SNSu among students in physical education college, as well as the differences in SNSu based on gender. Additionally, we aimed to assess the level of social anxiety among the study participants and examine whether it varied by gender and SNSu. We conducted a descriptive survey among 1,109 physical education students (688 females and 421 males) enrolled in public universities. We administered the social anxiety disorder-adult and SNSu questionnaire using Google Forms. We analyzed the data using means, standard deviations, frequencies, percentages, One-way ANOVA, and chi-square tests with a confidence level of 95% ($p < 0.05$). The results of the study showed that both male and female students used social networking sites (SNS) more than 10 times a day, with percentages of 46.3% and 46.1%, respectively. Additionally, 43.7% of male and 49.1% of female students reported using SNS for more than three hours per day. The mean score for social anxiety was 20.20, indicating a severe level of social anxiety among the study participants. Based on the responses of the sample study, the results showed an increase in negative indicators associated with SNSu and these unfavorable indicators were accompanied by an increase in the level of social anxiety.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Social networking site usage (SNSu) is an application that allows users to communicate and interact with each other. In other words, they are spaces on the internet used for communication, sharing, and connecting with others for various purposes [1]. Therefore, SNSu has become a part of people's lives in the 21st century, with Facebook being the most used, with 3.78 billion people worldwide [2]. Additionally, the SNSu has increased significantly since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. This increase has been further amplified by the preventive measures taken by most countries to limit the spread of the virus [3]. These sites have facilitated user interaction by allowing them to share opinions, pictures, information, and content [4].

According to statistics individuals spend 2.25 hours daily on SNSu [5]. In the same field, Ojha [6] indicated that daily SNSu was 58.33% for females and 57.58% for males, and those who used social networking site (SNS) for more than two hours daily, 40.50% of females and 47.47% of males. It was observed that young people spend 5-8 hours on SNSu with a percentage of 94.03%, and the social anxiety level was higher for females (47.30%) than males (42.25%). Facebook was the most popular SNS platform among students, with a percentage of 40%, followed by Instagram with 20%, and Twitter with 15%. Additionally, 74% of the study sample used more than three SNS platforms, while 12% used only one. The most important reasons for SNSu were for entertainment, while the minor concern was for scientific research and obtaining information, with a percentage of 8%. Furthermore, 70% of the study sample used these sites during leisure [7].

Additionally, there are 2.23 billion monthly active users on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter worldwide, with an annual growth rate of 11%. The monthly active internet users in China were 1.011 billion, with students accounting for 23% [8]. Subair [9] found that 85% of their study sample used Facebook, 97% used WhatsApp and YouTube, and 62% used Twitter and Instagram. Students spend 2-3 hours daily on social media, with 83% using it for socializing, 68% for work, 61% for entertainment, and 74% for information gathering. Internet addiction levels were also found to be at 45%. Additionally, 26.6% used SNSu for education [10] and 18% excessively [11]. Owunna [12] found that Facebook is the most widely used SNS, accounting for 36.70%, followed by Instagram (33.70%) and WhatsApp (19.40%). 38% of their study sample used SNS to search for information, and 15% for entertainment.

The study also showed increased social anxiety levels and a statistically significant relationship between SNSu and anxiety disorders. On the other hand, there are positive and negative effects of SNSu and some of these adverse effects include presenting inappropriate content and cyberbullying [13]. However, SNSu has also provided many benefits, such as accessing physical activity programs for weight loss [14], [15]. Also, getting support or advice from others and sharing personal experiences [16]. It also contributes to accessing relevant information and educational materials [17]. Furthermore, SNSu provides numerous opportunities for students to enhance their education, but some students have used these platforms for non-educational and unethical behaviors and the students spend long periods on SNS instead of focusing on academic tasks, which diverts their attention from their studies [18].

On the other hand, many studies have shown that excessive SNSu can lead to addiction to these sites due to the fear of missing out on something, such as text messages, friend updates, and social events on these SNS [19]. This excessive use is associated with social isolation, anxiety, loneliness, and depression [20]. It affects individuals' ability to communicate successfully face-to-face and can lead to a deterioration of genuine social relationships [21], [22]. Social anxiety level refers to the negative feelings that individuals experience on SNS, real or imaginary, due to the fear of receiving negative evaluations from others [23]. An increasing number of university students suffer from social anxiety levels due to the widespread SNSu [24]. Social anxiety is estimated to affect 7-33% of university students worldwide, while in China, 12-14% suffers from high social anxiety levels. If left unaddressed, social anxiety levels can develop into severe and persistent social anxiety disorders, negatively impacting students' academic performance and mental health [25], [26].

Studies have shown that social media use creates emotional and cognitive deficits and can affect individuals' mental health by being linked to depression [27]. According to Jordanian media statistics for 2021, the percentage of Facebook usage is 88.69%, and YouTube usage is 8.83%. There is a correlation between social anxiety levels and the SNSu. Also, a positive correlation between negative SNSu and social anxiety levels, and the risk factors for SNSu include loneliness, social anxiety, and depression [24], [28], [29]. Therefore, understanding the effects of excessive SNSu has become crucial, as psychologists and experts have warned about how young people engage in SNS and their role in deteriorating social and personal development [30]. It has also raised concerns among many scientists about the undesirable effects of SNSu on mental health [31].

Based on the background mentioned above, the current study was conducted as there is a pressing and ongoing need to assess the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on university students, particularly those in physical education colleges, as most of their courses are practical. Therefore, through this study, the researchers seek to identify the current situation of physical education college students' SNSu and the differences in SNSu based on gender and to diagnose the social anxiety level among the study sample and the differences in social anxiety level based on gender and SNSu. The results of this study can contribute to improving the procedures and strategies used to address the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and thus improve the psychological, social, and mental health aspects of physical education students. Additionally, the home quarantine was accompanied by a change in individuals' habits, including university students.

2. METHOD

This cross-sectional study was conducted from January to March 2023. The sample size was calculated based on a 25% response rate, a 95% CI, and a 5% margin of error, with a total student population of 6,000 enrolled in Faculties of Physical Education in public universities [32]. The required sample size was 275, and for this study, a sample size of 1,109 students (688 females and 421 males) was involved, which is four times larger than required.

2.1. Data collection

Participants completed the Severity Measure for Social Anxiety Disorder-Adult questionnaire, which has 10 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 0 (never) to 4 (all of the time). The mean total score is calculated by dividing the raw total score by the number of items in the measure [33]. In addition, participants completed the Social Networking Sites Usage questionnaire, which has 8 items [34]. The researchers combined the Social Anxiety Disorder-Adult questionnaire and the paragraphs related to social networking site usage in an electronic questionnaire (the Google questionnaire). After obtaining necessary approvals from universities, they sent the study tool link to participants via WhatsApp. Note that the language used in the study tool was Arabic, which was translated and reviewed by English language specialists before being presented to participants. The study tool link was sent to students' phone numbers and emails through the Deanship of Student Affairs in public universities. Moreover, the study tool was placed on the universities' website.

2.2. Scientific coefficients of the study tool

To verify the validity of the study tool, the researchers presented it to a committee of five arbitrators who were faculty members at the Universities of Jordan. They assessed the suitability of the questionnaire's paragraphs and its ability to achieve the study's goal, as well as its relevance to Jordanian society. The researchers made the amendments suggested by the arbitrators to contribute the final form of the study tool.

2.3. Participant's consent

The participants' rights were protected by explaining the purpose and significance of the study. The participants were informed that their participation in the survey would remain anonymous, and their privacy would be respected. They were provided with a comprehensive explanation that their involvement in the study was voluntary, and they could withdraw at any time. Approval was obtained from all study participants when they filled out the study tool. Therefore, there was no need for support from the Ethics Committee at the Ministry of Education.

2.4. Data analysis

For illustrative purposes, descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages were used for the study variables. The researchers used the t-test to investigate the differences between the mean social anxiety variable in the study sample according to the gender variable. In addition, the One-way ANOVA test was used to detect the differences in variables according to gender and the Social Networking Sites Usage Questionnaire by using SPSS version 24, with a confidence level of 95% ($p < 0.05$).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the study's findings, which aim to explore the current situation of physical education college students' SNSu and the differences in usage based on gender. Additionally, this chapter aims to diagnose the social anxiety level among the study sample and the differences in social anxiety levels based on gender and social networking site usage. Descriptive statistics for participants' responses to questionnaire items from 1,109 students at the faculties of Physical Education in public universities (421 females and 688 males) are contained in Tables 1-4. Table 1 shows the responses of the study sample related to the number of social networking sites accounts and the most commonly used sites.

Table 2 shows the frequencies and percentages of the number of times SNSu per day among the study sample. Referring to the data and percentages of the number of times SNS is used by male students in this Table 2, it is clear that male students use SNS more than 10 times a day with the highest percentage (46.3%). Similarly, female students use SNS more than 10 times a week with the highest percentage (46.1%). It should be noted that both male and female students use SNS mostly 10 times or more. Furthermore, most male students spend more than 3 hours per day, with the highest percentage (43.7%), and (49.1%) for female students.

Table 3 displays the timing of when the study sample uses SNS. It is evident from the data that the most common time for both male and female students to use SNS is during their free time, with a higher percentage for females than males. As a result, the majority of male students (74.6%) and female students (75.7%) use SNS during their free time. Moreover, the majority of the study sample uses SNS for browsing,

with the highest percentage for males (40.6%) and females (43.9%). Notably, browsing is the most common activity on SNS for both male and female students, and females have a higher percentage than males.

Table 1. Frequencies and percentages of the number of SNSu do you have accounts and the most social networking sites used (n=1,109)

Variables	Category	Male		Femal		Total sample	
		Percent %	Freq.	Percent %	Freq.	Percent %	Freq.
How many social networking sites do you have accounts with?	1	14	3.3	11	1.6	25	2.3
	2	22	5.2	38	5.5	60	5.4
	3	60	14.3	121	17.6	181	16.2
	4	108	25.7	192	27.9	300	27.1
Most social networking sites used	More than 4	217	51.5	326	47.4	543	49
	Facebook	179	42.5	216	31.4	395	35.6
	Instagram	129	30.6	257	37.4	386	34.8
	Tik Tok	20	4.8	34	4.9	54	4.9
	WhatsApp	34	8.1	107	15.6	141	12.7
	Snap Chat	17	4	48	7	65	5.9
	Twitter	21	5	7	1	28	2.5
	Messenger	8	1.9	14	2	22	2
	You Tube	13	3.1	5	0.7	18	1.6

Table 2. Frequencies and percentages of the number of times of SNSu and the time you spend SNSu per day (n=1,109)

Variables	Category	Male		Female		Total	
		Freq.	Percent %	Freq.	Percent %	Freq.	Percent %
How many times a day do you look at social networking sites?	Once a day	19	4.5	12	1.7	31	2.8
	2-5 times a day	88	20.9	157	22.8	245	22.1
	5-10 times a day	119	28.3	203	29.5	322	29.0
	10+	195	46.3	316	45.9	511	46.1
How much time do you spend on social networking sites per day?	less than 30	30	7.1	48	7.0	78	7
	30-60minutes	85	20.2	124	18	209	18.8
	2- less than 3 hours	122	29	155	22.5	277	25.1
	3 hours +	184	43.7	361	52.5	545	49.1

Table 3. Frequencies and percentages of when does the sample study SNSu? Moreover, what do you SNSu do? (n=1,109)

Variables	Category	Male		Female		Total sample	
		Freq.	Percent %	Freq.	Percent %	Freq.	Percent %
When do you access social networking sites?	Whilst at school/work	13	3.1	38	5.5	51	4.6
	Before getting out of bed	26	6.2	32	4.7	58	5.2
	During social occasions	11	2.6	6	0.9	17	1.5
	Meal times	15	3.6	27	3.9	42	3.8
	During free time	314	74.6	521	75.7	835	75.3
What do you use social networking sites for?	Before going to sleep	42	10.0	64	9.3	106	9.6
	Buying and selling	17	4.0	3	0.4	20	1.8
	Event planning	13	3.1	10	1.5	23	2.1
	To find employment	73	17.3	92	13.4	165	14.9
	Inspiration	34	8.1	70	10.2	104	9.4
	Keeping in touch with friends and family	105	24.9	194	28.2	299	27.0
	To browse/time waste	171	40.6	316	45.9	487	43.9
	To meet new friends	8	1.9	3	0.4	11	1.0

Table 4 presents the responses of the study sample regarding the impact of SNSu on relationships with friends and family. More than half of the male students (56.3%) reported that SNSu affects relationships, while (43.7%) stated that SNSu does not affect their relationships. The results showed that over half of the male students (53.7%) are considered addicted to SNSu, while (46.3%) are not addicted. As for female students, the results revealed that more than half of them (56.8%) are considered addicted to SNSu, while (43.2%) are not addicted.

Table 5 displays the social anxiety level of the sample study. Among the various items in the social anxiety scale, the paragraph "Spent much time preparing what to say or how to act in social situations" received the highest mean score of 20.17, indicating that the respondents experienced significant anxiety while interacting with others. When considering the total value of the social anxiety level, which takes into

account all the items in the scale, we observe that it reached 20.20, indicating a high social anxiety level among the respondents. The social anxiety scale used in this study is shown below the table for reference.

Table 4. Frequencies and percentages of the affected SNSu on a friend, family relationship and the addicted to SNSu (n=1,109)

Variables	Category	Male		Female		Total sample	
		Freq.	Percent %	Freq.	Percent %	Freq.	Percent %
Have social networking sites affected a relationship with friends/family/romantic?	No	184	43.7	324	47.1	508	45.8
	Yes	237	56.3	364	52.9	601	54.2
Do you consider yourself addicted to social networking sites?	No	195	46.3	297	43.2	492	44.4
	Yes	226	53.7	391	56.8	617	55.6

Table 5. Results of social anxiety level in the sample study (n=1,109)

Items	Means	SD	Rank
Spent much time preparing what to say or how to act in social situations	20.17	0.90	1
Needed help to cope with social situations (e.g., alcohol or medications, superstitious objects)	20.12	0.83	2
It distracted me from avoiding thinking about social situations	20.10	0.85	3
avoided, or did not approach or enter social situations	20.08	0.84	4
Left social situations early or participated only minimally (e.g., said little, avoided eye contact)	20.02	0.89	5
Felt a racing heart, sweaty, trouble breathing, faint, or shaky in social situations	19.8	0.59	6
Felt tense muscles, felt on edge or restless, or had trouble relaxing in social situations	19.7	0.61	7
Had thoughts of being rejected, humiliated, embarrassed, ridiculed, or offending others	19.4	0.61	8
Felt moments of sudden terror, fear, or fright in a social situation	19.1	0.72	9
Felt anxious, worried, or nervous about social situations	19.1	0.78	9
*Social anxiety	20.20	4.16	Severe

(*Social anxiety level: weak, less than 10; moderate, 10-less than 20 is moderate; severe 20-less than 30; very severe, 30-40)

Table 6 shows the social anxiety level associated with the most used social networking sites. Upon reviewing these means, it is clear that (Facebook) is the site causing the most social anxiety, with a mean of (22.39), followed by (Twitter) with a mean of (20.29). It is noteworthy that the social anxiety levels associated with SNSu were at a severe level for all sites except (WhatsApp), according to the anxiety classification scale shown this Table 6.

Table 6. Result of social anxiety level according to the most social networking sites used (n=1,10)

Social networking sites used	Mean	SD	Social anxiety level*
Facebook	22.39	4.32	Severe
Instagram	20.14	4.09	Severe
Tik Tok	20.04	4.30	Severe
WhatsApp	19.99	4.01	Moderate
Snap Chat	20.12	4.13	Severe
Twitter	20.29	3.80	Severe
Messenger	20.27	3.28	Severe
You Tube	20.26	4.37	Severe

(*Social anxiety level: weak, less than 10; moderate, 10-less than 20 is moderate; severe 20-less than 30; very severe, 30-40)

Table 7 shows the differences in social anxiety levels according to the gender variable using the t-test. The mean social anxiety level for males was 20.36, and for females, it was 20.10. Accordingly, there were no statistically significant differences between males and females regarding the gender variable.

Table 8 and Table 9 show the social anxiety level according to the number of accounts on social networking sites and the differences in the social anxiety level according to this variable. The highest social anxiety levels were found among users of four or more SNSu. The researchers used the One-Way ANOVA test to determine the statistical significance of these differences. Upon reviewing the significant differences between the means, it was found to be (0.04), which is less than (0.05). This indicates the presence of statistical significance for those differences in favor of the higher mean.

Table 7. The result of the independent sample t-test to explore the differences in the social anxiety level according to the gender variable (n=1,109)

Scale	Variable	Frequencies	Mean	SD	Tvalue	Sig
Social anxiety	Male	421	20.36	3.87	1.02	0.304
	Female	688	20.10	4.33		

Table 8. Result of social anxiety level according to the accounts on social networking sites (n=1,109)

Accounts on social networking sites	Frequencies	Mean	SD	Social anxiety level*
1	25	19.87	5.81	Moderate
2	60	19.92	3.61	Moderate
3	181	20.09	4.03	Severe
4	300	20.36	3.96	Severe
More than 4	543	20.80	4.28	Severe

(*Social anxiety level: weak, less than 10; moderate, 10-less than 20 is moderate; severe 20-less than 30; very severe, 30-40)

Table 9. Result of One Way-ANOVA analysis to reveal the differences in social anxiety level according to accounts on social networking sites (n=1,109)

Variable	Variance Source	Sum of squares	DF	Mean squares	F	Sig
Social anxiety	Between-group	47.287	4	11.822	0.683	0.04*
	Within group	19107.673	1104	17.308		
	Total	19154.959	1108	Mean Squares		

Table 10 presents the differences in social anxiety levels according to the variables of social networking sites affected and addiction to SNSu, as determined by the t-test. The results indicate statistically significant differences between the responses of the study sample regarding the social networking sites affected variable, favoring the "yes" answer with the highest mean (20.38). Similarly, there were statistically significant differences between the responses of the study sample regarding the addiction to SNSu variable, favoring the "yes" answer with the highest mean (20.57).

Table 10. The result of (the Independent Sample T. test) to explore the differences in the social anxiety level according to social networking sites affected and addiction to SNSu variables (n=1,109)

Variable	Items	Category	Frequencies	Mean	SD	t-value	Sig
Social anxiety	Social networking sites affected	Yes	601	20.38	4.36	1.57	0.017 *
		No	508	19.99	3.90		
	Addiction to SNSu	Yes	492	20.57	4.55	2.65	0.008*
		No	617	19.90	3.80		

(Social anxiety level: weak, less than 10; moderate, 10-less than 20 is moderate; severe 20-less than 30; very severe, 30-40*)

Tables 11-13 show the social anxiety levels according to the variable of the number of times SNS is used per day. The highest social anxiety levels were reported by users of (10+) SNSu). The researchers used the One-Way ANOVA test to determine the statistical significance of these differences. Upon reviewing the significant differences between the means, it was found to be (0.011), which is less than (0.05), indicating the statistical significance of those differences. To determine the differences in the social anxiety level according to the number of times SNS is used per day, the researchers used the Scheffe test.

Table 11. Result of social anxiety level according to number of times you (SNS) per day (n=1,109)

Variable	Number of times you (SNS) per day	Frequencies	Mean	SD	Social anxiety level*
Social anxiety	1	31	19.80	4.46	Severe
	2-5	245	19.87	3.74	Moderate
	6-10	322	20.52	3.82	Moderate
	More than 10	511	21.61	4.94	Severe

(*Social anxiety level: weak, less than 10; moderate, 10-less than 20 is moderate; severe 20-less than 30; very severe, 30-40)

Table 12. Result of One Way-ANOVA analysis to reveal the differences in social anxiety level according to the number of times you (SNS) per day (n=1,109)

Variable	Variance Source	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Squares	F	Sig
Social anxiety	Between-group	193.013	3	64.338		
	Within group	18961.946	1105	17.160	3.749	0.11*
	Total	19154.959	1108			

Table 13. The results of the (Scheffe) test according to the number of times you (SNS) per day (n=1,109)

Variable	Times a day do you look at (SNS)	Mean	2-5	6-10	More than 10
Social anxiety	1	19.80	0.027	0.020	0.155
	2-5	19.87		0.846	0.043
	6-10	20.52			0.015
	More than 10	21.61			

Tables 14 and 15 present the social anxiety level according to the variable of time spent on SNS per day. The results indicate that the highest social anxiety levels were observed among users who spend (3 hours or more) on SNSu per day. The researchers employed the One-Way ANOVA test to determine the statistical significance of these differences. Upon examining the significant differences between the means, it was found to be (0.207), which is higher than the standard threshold of (0.05), indicating no statistically significant differences between the means.

Table 14. Result of social anxiety level according to the times spend on SNS per day (n=1,109)

Variable	The time spent on (SNS) per day	Frequencies	Mean	SD	Social anxiety level*
Social anxiety	minutes 30-60	287	19.94	3.68	Moderate
	2- less than 3 hours	277	20.07	3.81	Severe
	3 hours +	545	20.45	4.54	Severe

(*Social anxiety level: weak, less than 10; moderate, 10-less than 20 is moderate; severe 20-less than 30; very severe, 30-40)

Table 15. Result of One Way-ANOVA analysis to reveal the differences in social anxiety level according to the times spent on SNS per day (n=1,109)

Variable	Variance Source	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Squares	F	Sig
Social anxiety	Between-group	55.316	2	27.658	1.575	0.207
	Within group	18047.881	1028	17.556		
	Total	18103.197	1030			

Understanding the impact of social media networks on university students after the COVID-19 pandemic is of utmost priority due to the increased mental health problems among university students, as indicated by psychologists. Based on the goals and responses of the study sample, the study results showed that 51.1% of males have more than four accounts on social media networks compared to 47.4% of females. There was an apparent decrease in the percentage of students using only one social media network, where the percentage for males was 3.3% and 1.6% for females, which is a lower percentage than the results achieved in the Ojha [6] study, which indicated that 12% use only one social media network. In this context, Ostic [3] pointed out that the SNSu increased significantly at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, the most commonly used platform among males and females was Facebook, with a percentage of 42.5% and 31.4%, respectively, followed by Instagram, 30.6% and 37.4%, respectively. This result is consistent with the findings of Statista [2], Ojha [6], and Owunna [12], which indicated that Facebook is the most commonly used platform. On the other hand, 46.3% of males use social media networks 10 or more times a day, compared to 45.9% of females. This is consistent with the daily time spent by students on social media networks, where the percentage was 43.7% for males and 52.5% for females. There is no doubt that excessive use of social media sites makes social comparison easier among young people, leading to lower levels of mental health and dissatisfaction with life [6].

According to the responses of the study sample, it is noteworthy that social networking sites have affected family and friend relationships by 43.7% for males and 47.1% for females. In addition, males and females consider themselves addicted to social networking sites by 53.7% and 56.8%, respectively. The researchers believe that the study sample's responses were logical and broadly consistent with the aforementioned variables, such as the percentage of those who have four or more accounts on social networking sites, the increase in the percentage of those who use social networking sites more than ten times daily, and those who use these sites for more than three hours.

The study results showed that males and females use social networking sites during leisure time with a percentage of 74.6% and 75.7%, respectively, which is consistent with the results of a study by Anwar [7] that indicated that the study sample used social networking sites during leisure time. Additionally, 10% of males and 9.3% of females use social networking sites before going to sleep, which affects their sleep quality due to the radiation emitted from smart device screens, as exposure to digital screens before sleep interferes with the production of melatonin and affects their biological clock rhythm. These radiations hinder the brain from performing natural processes that lead to feeling sleepy and reduce the secretion of the sleep hormone and melatonin. It is noteworthy that males and females use social networking sites for browsing and wasting time, with a percentage of 40.6% and 45.9%, respectively, which does not agree with a Subair [9] study indicating that the study sample used these sites for socialization and obtaining information.

The increase in the negative aspects of social media use was accompanied by an increase in social anxiety, which was reported at a mean of 20.20 with no statistically significant differences in social anxiety levels between males and females, where the averages were close to 20.36 and 20.10, respectively. Similarly, there was an increase in the level of social anxiety among the most widely used social network, Facebook, as

well as among those who have four or more accounts on social media, with an average of 20.80. The differences were statistically significant and in favor of this group. Additionally, there were statistically significant differences in the impact of social media on family relationships, friendships, and addiction to those networks. There were apparent statistically significant differences in the level of social anxiety based on the frequency of social media use, with users who use those networks ten or more times per day reporting an average of 21.61. Also, there was an increase in social anxiety among social media users who spend three or more hours per day, with an average of 20.45.

In this field, Li [19] indicates that excessive use of social media can lead to addiction to these sites due to the fear of missing out on something, such as text messages, friend updates, and social events, which is associated with social isolation, anxiety, and depression [20]. As a result, an individual's ability to communicate face-to-face in social relationships is negatively affected. Jaiswal *et al.* [25] indicates that 12-14% of university students suffer from high levels of social anxiety. Students who spend more time on social media suffer from depression, loneliness, and anxiety problems compared to those who use it less frequently [35].

Researchers suggest that males build an independent sense of self and maintain it, while females build a mutual dependence on their sense of self. This difference in self-awareness may lead to higher levels of anxiety and tension. However, in this study, the average level of social anxiety was similar between males and females. It is well known that an increase in social anxiety accompanies a decrease in social skills. Excessive use of social networking sites is associated with emotional deficits and mental health problems [36]. Therefore, researchers found that excessive use of social networking sites is associated with increased social anxiety, consistent with previous studies [37], [38]. The internet is full of images people upload and compare themselves to, which can evoke feelings of jealousy and inadequacy. Additionally, the internet needs better social connections and identity verification.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the responses of the study sample, the results showed an increase in negative indicators associated with SNSu, such as an increase in the percentage of users who have four or more accounts, an increase in the percentage of users who use social media networks 10 or more times a day, an increase in the percentage of users who spend three or more hours daily on social media networks, an increase in the percentage of users who feel that social media sites have negatively affected their family and friend relationships, and an increase in the percentage of users who feel addicted to social media networks. These unfavorable indicators were accompanied by an increase in the level of social anxiety, which was severe according to the study results, and indicated statistically significant differences in social anxiety based on these variables. Based on these findings, the researchers see the need for new studies in this field, with different samples from scientific and humanities colleges. Additionally, the researchers hope that mental health specialists can provide scientific guidance and seminars on the optimal use of social media networks and provide psychological and behavioral strategies in parallel with other procedures.




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